

## On the Cusp of a Scientific Revolution A Message from Anthony J. Angelo, MD Chief Medical Officer

It almost sounds like science fiction, but what I am about to describe is real science. I'm referring to a gene-editing tool known as CRISPR – the acronym for Clustered Regularly Interspaced Short Palindromic Repeats.



Why should we pay attention to CRISPR? Just as the Internet revolutionized the way we communicate, today more than 10,000 companies are studying CRISPR to learn how to better treat chronic and complex diseases. It is my belief that current research and its implications have the potential to profoundly change the lives of the individuals that we at Federation serve.

At some point within the next decade (maybe as soon as five years from now), the CRISPR tool may be used to help treat schizophrenia, depression, autism, and developmental disabilities in fundamentally new ways.

No matter how you view the notion of genetic modification – a part of science that sets out to change the genetic makeup of cells – I encourage you to become familiar with what is happening in this area of science.

To understand CRISPR, think of it as a piece – or, snippet – of a chromosome in a bacterium that is being invaded by a virus. The snippet takes a piece of viral DNA (or RNA) and copies it into its own DNA. The snippet is then used to detect and destroy DNA from further attacks by similar viruses.

Without going into a deeper explanation of the science, let's focus on some recent discoveries from this tool.

Scientists are working on a fungus-resistant wheat that can feed and nourish 100 times more people than the capacity of current wheat producers. Drought-resistant corn is also being tested. Sugars are being converted into fuel.

When it comes to tropical diseases and the deadly Zika virus, scientists are figuring out how to modify the reproductive ability of mosquitos that carry these diseases. If successful, this will be a huge breakthrough in eliminating the spread of such diseases.

The CRISPR tool is giving hope to people with genetic conditions. Scientists are experimenting to snip out genetic heart conditions, blindness, muscular dystrophy, and multiple sclerosis. Scientists have been successful in eliminating the HIV virus in mouse cells using CRISPR/Cas9. An even more precise tool, the CRISPR/Cpf1, which cuts on a bias and allows chromosomes to reknit themselves, decreasing the possible entry of unwanted chromosomes, is being used to determine how to destroy cancer cells that have been resistant to treatment.

What are the implications for individuals with developmental disabilities? We all know that most genes are the same in all people, but a small number of genes are slightly different between people. The small differences contribute to each person's unique physical features. What if gene modification could help people who suffer from depression or schizophrenia and a whole range of developmental disabilities?

We at Federation know the challenges that people with developmental disabilities face. Scientists are working to safely and naturally help alleviate suffering. I, for one, am very excited about the possibilities.

For now, however, we must focus on our work at hand. Let us all continue to work diligently to help the individuals and families who come to us seeking more fulfilling lives. And let us hope that, in the near future, science will ease their burdens and ultimately make their lives much easier.

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## 10 Questions-- Staff Chat

Name:  
Michelle  
Doublet



1. **Position:**  
Program  
Manager, LCSW

2. **Number of years with  
Federation:** 5 Years

**What is one thing you  
can't live without?**  
My Yoga Practice

3. **What is your personal  
philosophy?** My  
personal philosophy is  
to live in the moment  
fully, mindfully; taking  
nothing for granted,  
learning through the  
challenges, allowing  
those challenges to  
shape you for the better  
and to simply trust the  
process.

4. **What three words  
describe you?**  
Passionate, Caring,  
Understanding

5. **What do you do to  
de-stress?** I enjoy  
fitness. Hot Yoga, the  
gym and hiking. I find it  
imperative to work out  
daily and eat healthy in  
order to manage stress  
as a whole.

6. **Where is your favorite  
place to be?** I love  
being outside!

7. **How do you define  
success?** Success is  
defined for me when  
you find what you  
love, what you're really  
passionate about, and  
do it for a living.

8. **What is one thing we  
may not know about  
you?** One thing that  
you may not know  
about me is that I am  
a national qualified  
fitness competitor.

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## Jonathan and Kathleen Create a Home Together



Having a place to call "home" can be life-changing for many who come to Federation in need of housing.

For Jonathan S. and Kathleen S., Federation has played a significant role not only in their respective residential circumstances, but also in a relationship that bloomed when they met in 2011 at the Irving Berkowitz Residence.

As their friendship deepened, Jon and Kathy became a couple, then decided they wanted to move in together. Federation took the steps to find an apartment for them to share, and since 2013, Jon and Kathy have been living together in Federation's Supported Housing.

Almost anyone who meets Jon and Kathy would agree that they are the quintessential "happy" couple. Janiece Lamberth, Supported Housing Case Manager, said that they are also very grateful for all that Federation has done to support them in their life together.

*"Jon always has a joke to tell, and Kathy is the serious one," Lamberth said. "They might disagree occasionally, but then they always tell each other how much they love one another."*

Jon, at 52 years of age, is physically fit and enjoys going to the supermarket and getting groceries for the couple. Kathy, 63, is limited physically and uses a wheelchair. Lamberth said that they "support one another in keeping up their home and in staying healthy."

Jon and Kathy have also proven themselves to be good neighbors. Recently, as they were heading out of their apartment, they heard a man calling for help from a porch in the complex. Jon immediately dialed 911, then he and Kathy went over to the man. Jon helped him sit up on the steps, while Kathy gave him some water. Soon, the Emergency Services personnel arrived on the scene, whisking him away in an ambulance.

For Jon and Kathy, helping someone in need is a way of life and they were happy to be of service.

Recently, Lamberth arranged for Jon and Kathy to get new furniture, including a couch, love seat, coffee table, and end table, for their apartment.

In response, the couple wrote a letter of thanks to CEO Barbara Faron. Here is an excerpt from the letter, dated June 20, 2017:

*"This is a long overdue letter of thanks on behalf of the many blessings and great things the Federation has done for us. The latest being this week new living room furniture!! We are so overjoyed because of our apartment, and the countless other things that came with it. The staff also are incomparable! Thank you for your continued patience with us. We wish you & all Federation a happy & successful year if not decade."*

*Gratefully yours, Jon S. & Kathy S.*

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## Paul D. Discovers New-Found Independence in Apartment Treatment

A few months ago, Paul D., who had been living in Sunken Meadow, Building 81, with 24-hour supervised care, stepped into a new world. He moved to apartment treatment and began living with two other roommates in a house.

Independence is something that many Federation clients long for and work hard to attain. As Paul discovered, there is a period of adjustment while getting accustomed to being on one's own.

Kimberly Wighton, who was the senior counselor for his apartment treatment program, said that Paul is making tremendous progress.

"It's nice to see someone like Paul come from Building 81 to apartment treatment," Wighton said. "It's a wonderful progression to see him go through the stages of becoming more independent."

One of Paul's biggest challenges was getting used to no longer having 24/7 on-site staff members to help resolve challenges any time of day. Wighton said that Paul is learning that many questions do not require immediate answers and we encourage him to solve problems over time.

Paul, who is in his 60s and has a diagnosis of paranoid schizophrenia, is also learning about boundaries with roommates. Wighton has used humor to point out that not everything in the refrigerator belongs to him.

Paul now manages his finances, shops for groceries, prepares meals, and takes his medication as prescribed. Adept as socializing, he is making new friends.

A typical day for Paul might look like this: He makes oatmeal or has cereal for breakfast, then decides whether to go for a walk in the neighborhood or head out shopping with a Peer Specialist. Later, he sits down to dinner and chats about the day with his roommates.

As Wighton points out, Paul's journey to independence is already a success story.

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## Brand New Gateway Studios Offers Residents Privacy in a New Community

In March 2017, Federation received a call from the New York State Office of Mental Health asking whether the agency could recommend some clients for a new building that was going up in Brooklyn. Called Gateway, it held the advantage of offering studio apartments and an opportunity for individuals to live alone.

When Jesse Marroquin, Program Supervisor, Supportive Scattered-Site Housing, Team D, went to check out the building, it was still under construction. The studios he was shown were so new that they had plastic coverings on everything. His main goal was to make sure the apartments were safe and habitable for clients, as well as to check out the layouts and take measurements for the furniture.

Today, Gateway is fully occupied and 26 of Federation's clients live there. Not only do they live there, according to Marroquin, they "love living at Gateway, and they thank us for the opportunity to live there."

Clients began moving to the new building in May. Each had been with Federation for many years, either in Supported Housing or traditional housing. Many moved from the 6th Street Community Residence, which includes shared apartments, in Queens.

Moving from Queens to Brooklyn was a big move for many. However, once they were moved in, they began recognizing other individuals from various Federation programs. "Now it's a community. Everyone has transitioned there happily," Marroquin said.

The new development has a gym facility, laundry room, and a back-yard area. The street life also offers an abundance of conveniences, with retail establishments, a pharmacy, and a big shopping mall. Each apartment has a fully equipped kitchen and modern bathroom and is adaptable for people who are blind or disabled.

"To live alone in a studio is a rare opportunity for privacy and focus on one's self," said Marroquin, adding that some of the residents had lived in shelters or had a history of chronic homelessness.

"Amazing" is the word that Marroquin uses repeatedly to describe how the residents of Gateway are doing. Not only do they enjoy their new residential environment, many are adding decorative touches to personalize the studio apartments.

One client has added a padded headboard to the bed and created a modern aesthetic with clean, crisp lines that suit the steel grey tone of the furniture. When Marroquin complimented her on the beautiful apartment, she replied, "It means a lot to have my own space in a studio."

Another client decorated his apartment to represent different cultures, with a Victorian picture frame, a Buddha statue, and objects to reflect the country of Italy. "These are places I would like to go see," he told Marroquin.

During regular visits from Federation staff, as well as site visits to make sure people are safe and comfortable, Marroquin is finding that there are simply no complaints from Gateway residents.

"From Federation's view, it is wonderful to offer our clients a studio. If someone is happy in their apartment, there are no issues," Marroquin said.

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## Despite Blindness, John S. Inspires Others to Stay Optimistic

Six years ago, John S. developed Glaucoma, a disease that eventually rendered him legally blind. No longer could he drive a truck for his employer. Even the house he lived in was not a viable option. He needed guidance in this new chapter of his life.

In November 2016, John turned to Federation. With the support of two social workers and a case manager, he settled into a new residence. Today, at age 53, he lives in an apartment with a roommate, has an active social life, and is learning to read Braille.

"He is so motivated, and this inspires the people around him," said Samantha Mero, Community Health Worker. As John's case manager, Mero has come to see how his enthusiasm affects others.

Mero said that John has also encouraged his housemate to become more independent as well. John sets a good example around the apartment. Though his sight is severely limited, he can see shadows and contrasts and is able to clean surfaces in the bathroom and kitchen.

John has also won the respect of the Support Group for the Sight Impaired that he belongs to and attends every Monday. He was selected by his peers to be the group's president this past January.

Between his support group and learning Braille, John stays busy. He uses his phone to send text messages and can schedule his own appointments. He has begun typing on a regular desktop computer and is now typing 25 words per minute.

Mero recalled that John had his share of down days when he first came to Federation. "It was a big adjustment, moving to an apartment with a roommate," she said. "But John is very smart, full of positive energy, and inspires everyone around him."

Given John's positive attitude, it's not surprising that his social support system is extensive. His two brothers, friends, and an older couple who are like parents to him, are active in his life.



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## Getting Out for a Hike Has Many Benefits for PROS Participants

Every Friday at 10:30 a.m., 12 individuals pile into a van and head out of town. Their destination is a local park, with the goal of taking a hike or exploring the outdoors. Every outing has a different theme, such as emotional health, meditation, or self-awareness. By 12:15 p.m., they're back in Copiague where they started. Yet, as these PROS participants have noted, they're in a different state of mind when they return.

"One hour of hiking can help depression, anxiety, and cravings for substances," said Maria Christiansen, Program Manager for Copiague PROS, who helped create the program to get people outside. "It gives clients an opportunity to activate their coping skills and actually implement what they are learning in our workshops. For example, we don't just talk about meditation, we go sit on a beach and meditate."



The group, appropriately named "Adventures," started May 26 and is already a favorite among many PROS members.

Ryan Busuttill, Associate Director of Clinical Services, considers the new program a resounding success and points to the "Before-and-After" surveys that participants complete each Friday. The "Before" comments tend to be about feeling "lethargic." The "After" comments include "I feel positive," "negative thoughts are gone," and "I felt my anxiety lowered."

Christiansen said that participants report seeing a shift in cravings for substances. She even noted that people who usually don't speak with anybody are now talking with others during the outings. Overall, Christiansen said that people feel a sense of accomplishment for participating.

"Getting outside, exploring, moving around as a group gives each person a chance to experience something new, away from triggers that lead to overeating, smoking, and negative thinking," she said. "A heavy smoker said he didn't crave a cigarette once while hiking."

Busuttill is eager to share the findings with Federation colleagues. "Based on the success of the hiking groups, we will share this with the two other PROS programs," he said. "It's a new program and it's having great benefits for the people we work with."

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## At a Low Point, Steve A. Finds the Courage to Change His Life

This past April, Steve A. enrolled in Federation's Care Coordination program. He was upfront about having a drinking problem, and it was clear that the 54-year-old was struggling with issues including personal hygiene. He had been a Navy SEAL, but was discharged without benefits. Diagnosed with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, he suffered from depression and had difficulty managing his anger.

When Rosette Noyan, Care Coordinator, first met with him, she listened carefully and learned about his life. One thing was for sure: The most important person in Steve's life was his 10-year-old daughter. Every week day, Steve would take his daughter to school and pick her up at the end of the day to help out his ex-wife.

Shortly after coming to Federation, a schoolteacher reported that Steve had alcohol on his breath. His life changed drastically and he was no longer allowed to see his daughter. Rosette stepped in with a firm message.

"I advised him to think about the impact his drinking was having on his daughter," Rosette recalled. "The next day, he went to Catholic Charities, got intake, started taking his medication, shaved, dressed, and even got a patch for nicotine."

Rosette asked him about the abrupt change. "He told me that he needs his daughter," Rosette said. "I had to give him a reality check, and from then on he began to change his life."

Steve now gets to talk to his daughter by video once a day and has visitation every two weeks.

For getting him back on track, Steve calls Rosette "an angel." Rosette, who meets with Steve every two weeks, views it as just doing her job.

"I told him there may be setbacks, so it's best to take it one day at a time," Rosette said, adding that she also asks him to write down his daily routine so that he can account for his idle time. She has also found an anger management class for him, and is encouraging Steve to volunteer and find purpose in his community.

Encouraged by Rosette, he sees a therapist once a week and goes to a psychiatrist once a month. The Brooklyn native is taking life one day at a time, step by step, always keeping his daughter in mind.

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## Senior Volunteers Honored and COO Philip Matcovsky Recognized as "Man Of The Year"

There's always something special about Federation's annual Senior Volunteer Recognition Luncheon. This past June 16, the agency and more than 250 guests honored volunteers from its Foster Grandparent and Senior Companion programs.

The event, held at the Stonebridge Country Club in Smithtown, NY, recognized the dedicated seniors who make a difference in the lives of children with special needs as well as homebound seniors.

This year, Federation's Chief Operating Officer, Philip Matcovsky, was recognized as the organization's "Man of the Year."

News12's Doug Greed served as emcee, and Barbara Faron, CEO of Federation, spoke of the importance of the Senior Volunteers and lauded Matcovsky for 30 years of outstanding service to the agency.



"We're thrilled to honor the deep dedication and commitment of our Senior Volunteers, as well as the distinguished career of my friend and colleague, Philip Matcovsky," Faron said. "Many thanks to our incredible program and event sponsors and to Federation's extraordinary volunteers for helping to transform hundreds of lives across Long Island."

Matcovsky joined Federation in 1987 as a counselor in the homeless outreach program before moving up the ranks to become a supervisor, director, and COO. In his current position, Matcovsky has been instrumental in helping Federation and its 500 employees navigate major changes to managed care, while managing day-to-day operations of an agency with a \$48 million budget. He continues to strive for the best possible care for Long Island seniors, as well as individuals who are homeless or living with mental health challenges.

Federation's Senior Director of Outreach Services, Tracy Falkner, LMSW, awarded Volunteer of the Year Awards to Foster Grandparent Jeanette Ingenito and Senior Companion Lucy Caracciola for their exemplary care and service. The agency's 140 Foster Grandparents currently mentor more than 2,500 children in Suffolk County, while Federation's Senior Companion Program provides support and assistance to frail homebound seniors.

Many dignitaries attended or participated in the luncheon. Senator Phil Boyle (NYS 4th Senate District) and Ed Romaine, Town of Brookhaven Supervisor, served as Guest Speakers at the event, commending Federation's volunteers for their efforts to enhance the quality of life of Long Island children and seniors. Other notable attendees included New York State Assemblywoman Kimberly Jean-Pierre (Assembly District 11) and Suffolk County Legislator Tom Cilmi, who represents the Tenth Legislative District of New York. Representatives from Senator John E. Brooks' office (NYS 8th Senate District) and Tom Croci's office (NYS 3rd Senate District) were also in attendance.

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### ***Congratulations to all of the Federation Team's Accomplishments!***

- **Charles Taylor from Wyandanch clinic obtained his LMSW**
- **Danielle Paruolo became Program Manager in Babylon PROS**
- **Michelle Doublet Manager of Patchogue PROS obtained her LCSW**
- **Eric Schatzel was promoted to Associate Director**
- **Michelle Alam received her Provisional Specialist Certificate**
- **Theresa Daskocz was promoted to Senior Counselor at Glen Cove CR**
- **Barbara Mastrantoni, Senior Accounts Receivable Specialist, is celebrating 20 years at Federation**

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Main Office  
One Farmingdale Road - West Babylon, NY 11704

P: 631-669-5355  
[www.fedoforg.org](http://www.fedoforg.org)

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